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McSwain Carpets & Floors Wins It For the Team!

World Floor Covering Association Awards Gold Standard Award to Cincinnati Based Retailer

Five Additional Standout Retailers Receive Honorable Mentions!

February 11, 2016 - Dalton, GA – Scott Humphrey, Chief Executive Officer, World Floor Covering Association (WFCA), today announced the annual winner of the Gold Standard Award for excellence in retailing. McSwain Carpets & Floors, based in Cincinnati, OH, took home the honors. The WFCA Gold Standard Award carries with it a \$5,000.00 check, press recognition, a trophy, acknowledgement on the WFCA website and a customized WFCA seal for the winning store's entrance.

"McSwain stood out from the crowd in many ways but their overall mantra sums it up best 'to put the customer first and to meet and exceed expectations 100% of the time,'" said Humphrey. "Not only has this store continued to achieve financial growth in a challenging market, they have also netted high ratings in customer satisfaction, retention, and new business word-of-mouth referrals. A true testament of their retail mastery - what some might consider to be the Holy Grail - they have achieved extremely high ratings for 'employee satisfaction and retention'."

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“In addition to their stellar track record in business growth, customer relations and employee satisfaction, McSwain also received the highest honors a retailer can possibly hope to achieve from one of the largest flooring manufacturers in the world, Armstrong,” said Humphrey. “McSwain took home the coveted ‘Elite’ award which is only given to the top 2% of more than 11,200 independent flooring stores nationwide. McSwain was the only store in the greater Cincinnati/Dayton area that was recognized. According to Armstrong, McSwain represents the very best of what a retailer should be. Consumers can count on them for ‘an expert team of trained product professionals dedicated to helping shoppers choose the right floor.’”

Recognized by many for outstanding customer service, McSwain has designed unique tactics to keep customers happy and coming back with repeat business. A pre-installation checklist helps to ensure that everyone involved from the customer to the installer are all on the same page. A company representative is also designated on every job to stay in touch with the customer throughout each phase of the process from ordering to post installation. McSwain instills in their staff the importance of exceeding customer expectations and as part of their approach they empower their staff to make immediate decisions when problems need to be addressed and corrected. Not having to deal with “red tape” and other delays alleviates frustration and disappointment and ensures customer experience that is as smooth and stress-free as possible. Post-installation, McSwain sends all customers an online Satisfaction Survey. If problems are detected the management team swings into action to correct less than positive experiences promptly.

McSwain has also made heavy investments in their marketing programs. This included revamping their website. The new site is up by 76% in unique visitors from 2014 to 2015. Social Media has also been a big growth area for the store with double-digit growth in number of followers on the most popular sites including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Pinterest. In total McSwain has reached over 475,000 people via social media in 2015 alone.

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In response to receiving the WFCA award, owner Jason McSwain stated, “We are thrilled to have been honored with the Gold Standard Award by the WFCA. We have been serving the metro Cincinnati community for over 45 years and in that time we have continued to build on our foundation, not only as a retailer focused on our customer’s experience but also as a pillar of support in our community. At McSwain, we value ‘giving back’ as a central mission in our business model. Our employees are encouraged to be leaders in all capacities within the community and our business supports this. We are active with many causes including St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, ‘Homes For Our Troops’, Habitat for Humanity, the establishment of a free medical clinic in Cincinnati and multiple other charitable causes. Thank you WFCA for this recognition!”

In addition to one standout retailer, for the first time the WFCA is also recognizing five additional stores this year for Gold Standard Honorable Mentions:

- Carpet Plus based in Charlottesville, VA;
- Classique Floors based in Portland, OR;
- Sergenians Floor Coverings based in Madison, WI;
- Cash and Carry Flooring based in Traverse City, MI; and
- Coles Fine Flooring based in San Diego, CA

Those who received honorable mentions stood out among all other applicants. WFCA plans to continue this recognition for deserving applicants on an ongoing basis.

To receive the Gold Standard Award, companies are reviewed and judged based on:

- Knowledge – ensuring a knowledgeable management and staff who work to remain informed on the state of the industry at all times;
- Customer Service – providing courteous service and offering customers help throughout the purchase and after-purchase processes;
- Quality of Store Image – a clean, professional, well maintained store must be presented at all times; and
- Code of Conduct - the facility must adhere to the WFCA Code of Conduct.

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A company also must be a member of the WFCA, have been in business for at least 3 years, and have a clear Better Business Bureau report.

To be considered, applicants complete a multiple-page submission form and present multimedia marketing materials and other collateral that is factored into the review process. The submission deadline for the 2016 award was December 31, 2015.

Companies interested in entering or nominating an entrant for the 2017 Gold Standard Award can visit wfca-pro.org for more details.

About WFCA

The World Floor Covering Association (WFCA), the official sponsor of the annual Surfaces tradeshow, is the floor covering industry's largest advocacy organization, representing floor covering retailers, contractors and allied service providers throughout North America.

The WFCA is a recognized leader in marketing research and industry programs for flooring professionals. In addition, it publishes the only retailer-oriented trade periodical, *Premier Flooring Retailer*. On the consumer end, in addition to an ongoing consumer focused flooring awareness public relations program, it operates the highly successful and award-winning premier consumer flooring website, WFCA.org, which provides unbiased information about every type of floor covering and connects customers to members' retail stores. The WFCA also influences public policy affecting the floor covering industry and consumers. For more information about the WFCA, visit WFCA.org and WFCA-PRO.org.

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